

REMARKS

Claims 1-26 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, claims 1, 11, 21-22 and 25-26 are amended. No new matter is added. Reconsideration of this application is respectfully requested.

Applicants thank the Examiner for the indication that claims 5-8 and 11-20 contain allowable subject matter. These claims are not rewritten in independent form, because it is believed that the base claims from which they depend are allowable as discussed below.

I. §112 Rejection

The Office Action rejects claims 1-26 under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, for reasons stated in the Office Action. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claims 1, 11, 21-22 and 25-26 are amended, thereby obviating the rejection. Withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

II. §102(e) Rejection

The Office Action rejects claims 1-4, 9-10 and 21-26 under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) over U.S. Patent Application No. 2004/0076154 to Mizutani et al. ("Mizutani"). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Applicants enclose with this Amendment a verified, accurate translation of Japanese Patent Application No. P-2003-070895, filed March 14, 2003, from which the present application claims priority.

Mizutani was filed in the United States Patent and Trademark Office after the March 14, 2003 priority date of the present application. Therefore, Mizutani is disqualified as a reference under 35 U.S.C. §102(e).

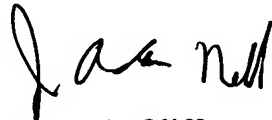
Accordingly, withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

III. Conclusion

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,



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